

# Agriculture

## Southwest

Washington maintains a proud tradition as fertile farming land. For centuries, Southwest Washington families have grown products ranging from cranberries and oysters to carrots and Douglas fir. Our farmers are committed, hardworking, valued members of our community and good stewards of the environment.

Our farmers face a host of threats: urban sprawl, foreign competition, punitive taxes, and burdensome regulations. I've worked to address these threats and preserve our local farms. I've supported reforming the estate tax to better protect family farmers and streamlining the environmental permitting process. I will continue working for a comprehensive, bi-partisan farm bill which provides assistance to Washington farmers, fighting to prevent the dumping of raspberries by foreign producers, and opposing trade agreements harmful to our local agriculture industries.

I've met families who have farmed in Southwest Washington for many generations, and they understand the needs of our region as well as anyone. I'm committed to working to preserve our farming tradition and continuing to support our farmers and family foresters in Congress.

## Raspberries and Cranberries

Raspberry growers throughout Southwest Washington have faced growing and unfair competition from subsidized Chilean imports dumped into markets below our growers' costs. Congressman Baird has worked closely with local growers and led congressional efforts to end this illegal dumping of Chilean raspberries. As a result of his efforts, there is now a 6.33% anti-dumping tariff on Chilean imports and the domestic market is beginning to stabilize. Baird also helped secure a grant from the Agriculture Department which offset a fraction of the losses raspberry growers endured from the dumped Chilean imports.

## Cranberry

growers have also faced challenges. Surpluses in 2000 and 2001 caused a drop in prices that threatened the viability of the cranberry industry. Congressman Baird successfully passed an amendment through Congress that directed the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to purchase additional cranberries and provide \$20 million in market loss payments to help growers weather the low prices.

In 2004, a paperwork delay at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) threatened to disrupt the ability of growers to harvest their berries in a timely manner. Congressman Baird personally intervened and convinced the EPA to expedite their procedures and allow the harvest to begin. Raspberries and cranberries are specialty crops, meaning they do not receive subsidies through government farm programs similar to cotton or grains. To help support specialty crops without providing subsidies, Congressman Baird supports the Equitable Agriculture Today for a Healthy America Act. The legislation will allow specialty crop growers, like berry growers, access to marketing and conservation programs at the Department of Agriculture.

## Shellfish

The West Coast shellfish industry annually produces approximately \$85 million worth of oysters, clams and mussels. The shellfish produced on these farms bring economic development and valuable jobs to rural West Coast communities, including many in Southwest Washington. Recognizing the importance of the shellfish industry to Southwest Washington and the entire country, Congressman Baird established the Congressional Shellfish Caucus in 2005. The Caucus provides a platform for those within Congress to meet, exchange ideas and gain information about the shellfish industry. Recently, members of the Shellfish Caucus asked that shellfish be included as a specialty crop so growers could gain access to marketing assistance.

To help meet the threats of Spartina grass, Congressman Baird worked to secure millions of dollars to eradicate Spartina from the Willapa Bay and other estuaries.

## Dairy

Congressman Baird is a strong advocate for Southwest Washington dairy farmers. When the dumping of foreign-produced Milk Protein Concentrate threatened the viability of small local farms, Congressman Baird co-sponsored legislation to end the illegal dumping. When declines in milk prices threatened to bankrupt Southwest Washington dairy producers, Congressman Baird supported temporary assistance to help farmers through the particularly difficult time.

## Farm Bill

Congressman Baird has helped secure funds for research affecting crops throughout Southwest Washington.

Congressman Baird has worked to ensure that our farm policies help those who need it the most. On July 27, 2007, Congressman Baird voted against the Farm Bill because it favored large agribusiness over the needs of small

farmers and rural communities in Southwest Washington and throughout the country, subsidized unhealthy foods instead of promoting nutrition, funded crops that would harm worldwide efforts to combat hunger, and did not take enough steps to promote sound environmental and conservation policies.

Instead, Congressman Baird voted in favor of the Fairness in Farm and Food Policy Amendment, which would have made family farms a priority in U.S. agriculture policy by reforming agriculture subsidies. The amendment would have also implemented increased conservation measures and refocused spending on nutritious specialty crops, instead of providing subsidies primarily for cycle crops that promote unhealthy diets and benefit large factory farms.

## Research

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Congressman Baird has worked to find funding to develop new cranberry varieties, which would allow Southwest Washington growers to produce berries of superior quality to foreign imports. In the Fiscal Year 2008 Agriculture Appropriations bill, he secured approximately \$327,000 for the Northwest Center for Small Fruits Research, which conducts research on innovative genetic and environmental technologies that is intended to increase grower returns and improve product taste and quality. This research will help keep our area's growers competitive in the global marketplace.

To support shellfish growers, he has also worked with regulatory agencies to help expedite the availability of more effective and environmentally sensitive herbicides, to combat Spartina and ghost shrimp. In the Fiscal Year 2008 Agriculture Appropriations bill, he obtained \$563,000 for the Aquaculture Research Initiative at Washington State University. This funding helps researchers address the needs of shellfish growers, including finding a responsible method to eliminate burrowing shrimp.

Congressman Baird has repeatedly joined with other members of the Washington Congressional delegation to secure funding for a new Agriculture Research Service facility in Washington. The state-of-the-art facility will provide scientists with improved agriculture research laboratories and equipment, and in turn help them continue to improve the economic productivity and profitability of agriculture in the Pacific Northwest.

## Conservation Programs

Congressman Baird believes there must be an appropriate balance between

utilizing land for agricultural purposes, and preserving our environmental resources for future generations.

#### Congressman

Baird believes we must help farmers meet the public demand for clean water and air, open spaces, and safe, fresh food. As a result, he supports programs that provide farmers, ranchers, and foresters with economic incentives to adopt environmentally-responsible, sustainable stewardship practices. Such programs promote economic development, without damaging our limited natural resources. Congressman Baird is a supporter of the Healthy Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act. The comprehensive legislation provides federal farm spending to these important conservation programs.

#### Forest Policy

Congressman Baird is proud of his work to encourage responsible forestry policies and ensure that the Forest Service has the money that it needs. As a Member of the House Budget Committee, Congressman Baird helped restore funding to the Forest Service after the Administration proposed drastic cuts.

Congressman Baird is a cosponsor of the Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act, which would establish a new federal fund to cover the growing costs associated with fighting emergency wild land fires.

He also helped author the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act, legislation which would expedite the clean-up and restoration of federal forests after catastrophic events like wildfires, hurricanes, and windstorms. The bill was drafted after nearly two years of hearings and countless conversations with those on all sides of this important issue. The Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act passed the House in May of 2006.

Congressman Baird believes that - if enacted - this responsible, common sense bill would improve the process for recovering dead wood from forests following catastrophes. He believes we can responsibly harvest wood here at home, abiding by environmental protections and creating jobs, or we can get our wood from clear cuts in equatorial rainforests where the environment is far more fragile and environmental protection and labor laws are far weaker or even nonexistent.

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House  
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